Notice of Allowability	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/377,821	NIHEI, KANAME	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Douglas Q. Tran	2624	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to *RCE on 10/05/04*.

2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are *1-13*.

3. ☒ The drawings filed on *8/20/99 and 2/18/04* are accepted by the Examiner.

4. ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____ .
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

 * Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.

6. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.

 Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).

7. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date _____ .
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____.

Allowable Subject Matter

1. Claims 1-13 are allowed.

Claims 1, 5 and 8 are independent claims.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

As to claims 1 and 5, the present invention from the application discloses a multiple-printer control apparatus and control method for controlling a plurality of printers in which " (a printer control unit for) performing control, on the basis of the determined **print-processing capabilities** of each of the plurality of printers and the **determined overall workload** of the **quantity of printing** to be performed using the plurality of printers that are capable of printing as determined by the print processing capability detection unit, **each printer** of the plurality of printers to print at least one of images and characters **the number of sheets whereof conforms to a number of prints**".

As to claim 8, the present invention from the application discloses a multiple-printer control apparatus for controlling a plurality of printers in which " a printer control unit for allocating, based on the **determined print-processing capabilities** of each of the plurality of printers and on the **determined overall workload** including the determination of **the quantity of printing** to be performed using the plurality of printers, the printing to be performed at each of the plurality of printers wherein **each printer** of the plurality of printers prints at least one of images and characters **the number of sheets whereof conforms to a number of prints**".

The closest prior art such as Owa et al. (US Patent No. 6,348,971 B2) discloses a printer selection device that selects an optimum printer for printing a document based on user

information indicating such conditions as print commands and specifications, and based upon printer information concerning print environments of the printers and causes the optimum printer to print the document. However, Owa, including an updated electronic text search, fails to anticipate or render the above underlined limitations from claims 1, 5 and 8 obvious.

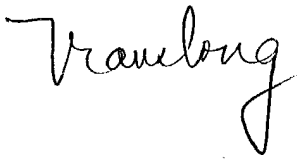
Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Contact information

2. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Douglas Q. Tran whose telephone number is (703) 305-4857 or E-mail address is douglas.tran@uspto.gov.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-4700.

Douglas Q. Tran
Dec. 21, 2004



Examiner's amendment

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Catherine Voisinet on Dec. 21 2004.

Please replace the claim 8, which is filed on 8/5/04, with the following:

8. (Currently Amended) A multiple-printer control apparatus for controlling a plurality of printers comprising:

a print-processing capability determining unit for determining print processing capability of each of the plurality of printers;

an overall-workload determining unit for determining overall workload including the quantity of printing to be performed using the plurality of printers; and

a printer control unit for allocating, based on the determined print-processing capabilities of each of the plurality of printers and on the determined overall workload, the printing to be performed at each of the plurality of printers wherein each printer of the plurality of printers prints at least one of images and characters the number of sheets whereof conforms to a number of prints.

Douglas Q. Tran
Dec. 21, 2004

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